



# *The Old Ironsides Report*

Wednesday, April 28, 2004



## Team forms bonds stronger than friendship

**Story and photo by Sgt. Christopher Stanis, 1AD PAO**  
FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq – The public eye often focuses attention on siblings, spouses, or other relatives serving in the military together in a theater of combat operation.

But after a year of close quarters living and working and high stress of war, men and women who came together as nothing more than seniors, peers and subordinates have formed bonds thicker than blood.

A plot of dry, dusty desert, somewhere between the Iraqi holy cities of Al Kut and An Najaf, is home to the Fort Polk based 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

The regiment, as part of Task Force 1st Armored Division, was recently extended in Iraq for a follow-up mission.

Sgt. Rand Hultz sits on a cot in front of his Humvee and jokingly questions how he can possibly live with these “guys” any longer.

Hultz, a former National Guard officer who resigned his commission then rejoined active service after the September 11th terrorist attacks, is part of the 2ACR combat observation lazing team, or COLT.

And, “these guys” are his fellow forward observers, a modern-day “Band of Brothers.”

“It’s funny,” Hultz said, “The more we hate each other the closer we move together.” These nine men have gone from living on their vehicles, to an open-bay barracks in a warehouse with makeshift walls of cloth, and back to living on their trucks.

They have been forced to learn each other’s intricacies and personal quirks.

“This is closer than I’ve been to anyone,” said Spc. Jonathan Graf. “I haven’t had privacy for a year. These guys know me more than my own siblings.”

Graf stands tall and thin. He is young and does not have the outward appearance of a battle-hardened warrior.

The group started out their tour in Baghdad, patrolling the streets of Sadr City – the northern portion of Iraq’s capital and a notoriously hostile area – providing convoy security and acting as a protective service detachment for the regimental commander and command sergeant major.

They have been shot at, mortared, rocketed and blown up; yet they appear as jovial as the day they arrived in theatre. No onlooker could tell the pain they experienced: the pain of losing one of their own. Losing a brother.

In June 2003, one COLT team on patrol struck an improvised explosive device. The IED killed one and wounded two severely enough for redeployment.

“I had just gotten back inside the gate, dropped my gear and took me boots off. That’s as far as I got when I heard the IED go off,” Hultz recalled, his tone now solemn.

Hultz had just returned from a patrol. “I thought (the other team was) still inside the gate.”

Cpl. Tomas Sotelo was instantly killed in the attack.

His death hit his teammates hard. “We didn’t do anything for



(From left) Sgt. Michael Treat, Sgt. Jeremy Hubler, Spc. Andrew White, Spc. Daniel Hartley, Spc. Tony Harper, Pfc. Jeremy Humphreys, Spc. Jonathan Graf, Sgt. Rand Hultz and Spc. Bendigo Agnew stand ready for their next mission. The men make up 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment’s combat observation lazing team (COLT) and have formed a brotherhood through war.

the next 48 hours,” Hultz said. And as he explained it, they couldn’t, because they would have shot anything or anyone that moved.

“Sotelo was my brother,” said Sgt. Michael Treat, as he revealed a tattoo on his shoulder with the corporal’s name. “If we lost any others, their names would go on my arm.”

Treat seems to be a family oriented man. In his 30s, he is one of the oldest men in the group.

The forward observers described Sotelo as a generous, warm-hearted Soldier, who never said a bad word and never complained. He just wanted to get the mission done.

They all agreed that he was the one most likely to be a career Soldier.

“In that one instance,” said Hultz, “they got the best of us.”

But the mission couldn’t stop.

Shortly after, the COLT platoon received a couple of replacements.

Initially, there was a sense of un-welcomeness all around.

“I didn’t know how to react,” said Pfc. Jeremy Humphreys. “I was just coming in; I was the new guy. They didn’t know me.”

Sgt. Jeremy Hubler was the other new guy. He came in from 1st Squadron.

Still, “I didn’t know what to think,” he said. “I wanted to fit in, but how do you jump in with a group of guys just after they lost someone?”

**Continued on page 3...**

## **NEWS...**

### **U.S. Kills Scores of Insurgents in Najaf**

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - U.S. troops fought militiamen overnight near Najaf, killing 64 gunmen and destroying an anti-aircraft gun. An American soldier was killed Tuesday in Baghdad, raising the U.S. death toll for April to 115 - the same number lost during the entire invasion of Iraq last year.

The battle outside Najaf was one of the heaviest with the militia as U.S. troops try to increase the pressure on gunmen loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. U.S. troops moved into a base in Najaf that Spanish troops are abandoning, but promised to stay away from the sensitive Shiite shrines at the heart of the southern city.

### **AP: 10 U.S. Contractors in Iraq Penalized**

WASHINGTON (AP) - Ten companies with billions of dollars in U.S. contracts for Iraq reconstruction have paid more than \$300 million in penalties since 2000 to resolve allegations of bid rigging, fraud, delivery of faulty military parts and environmental damage. The United States is paying more than \$780 million to one British firm that was convicted of fraud on three federal construction projects and banned from U.S. government work during 2002, according to an Associated Press review of government documents.

### **Spain Completes Troop Pullout From Iraq**

MADRID, Spain (AP) - Spain has completed the withdrawal of its peacekeeping troops from Iraq, Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said Tuesday. "No Spanish member of the Plus Ultra II brigade remains in Iraq," Zapatero told Parliament in a debate on his decision to withdraw the 1,300 troops.

### **Supreme Court Hears Cheney Secrecy Case**

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Constitution gives presidents and vice presidents power to gather advice and make decisions without being forced to reveal every detail of how those decisions are made, the Bush administration's top Supreme Court lawyer argued Tuesday. "This is a case about the separation of powers," Solicitor General Theodore Olson told the justices at the start of lively arguments about privacy in White House policy-making.

### **North Korea Reports Blast Damage at \$365M**

BEIJING (AP) - North Korean train explosion victims battling severe burns and meager medical options received visits Tuesday from international aid workers, who began assessing long-term needs for relief - including ways to make sure "traumatized" children return to school.

North Korea said Tuesday the disaster caused about \$356 million in damage - far above what international donors have promised. South Korea has promised \$1 million in relief goods, and the United States said it would give \$100,000 to the Red Cross to help those left homeless from Thursday's explosion.

## **In other news...**

### **Last Oldsmobile to Roll Off Assembly Line**

LANSING, Mich. (AP) -- The Oldsmobile, the line of cars that started out in 1897 and featured models such as the Rocket 88 and the muscular 442, is coming to an end this week.

The last Olds, an Alero, is due to roll off an assembly line Thursday in Lansing, the same city where the brand was born.

General Motors Corp. had announced in December 2000 that it would discontinue the Oldsmobile, the oldest automotive brand name in U.S. history.

"Generations of people in Lansing have been touched by Oldsmobile, either by making them in the plant or driving them down the road," GM spokeswoman Kim Carpenter said.

"I can understand GM's business decision, but seeing Oldsmobile go is almost like a death of someone in the family," said Ken Nicholas, a longtime Olds enthusiast from Eaton Rapids.

On Wednesday, GM will unveil a series of 500 Special Edition Aleros, which will bear special logos and certificates of authenticity.

However, no one will have a chance to buy the absolute last Olds off the assembly line - it is destined for Lansing's R.E. Olds Transportation Museum.

The Oldsmobile was named for its founder, Ransom E. Olds, who started the Olds Motor Vehicle Co.

Worldwide, only the Daimler name - of Daimler, Mercedes-Benz and now DaimlerChrysler - is older.

GM later absorbed the company and the Olds became the middle-class, middle-age car in GM's lineup - more expensive than Chevrolet and Pontiac but below Buick and Cadillac.

Oldsmobile was among the pioneers in using chrome-plated trim and the mass production of automatic transmissions. It gave drivers the V-8 Eighty Eight series, the front-wheel-drive Toronado and the Cutlass, which included the 442 muscle car.

## **Thought for the day...**

### **Thanksgiving**

In a sermon at Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, Gary Wilburn said, "In 1636, amid the darkness of the Thirty Year's War, a German pastor, Martin Rinkart, is said to have buried 5,000 of his parishioners in one year, an average of 15 a day. His parish was ravaged by war, death, and economic disaster.

In the heart of that darkness, with the cries of fear outside his window, he sat down and wrote this table grace for his children: "Now thank we all our God/With heart and hands and voices;/Who wondrous things hath done,/In whom his world rejoices./Who, from our mother's arms,/Hath led us on our way/With countless gifts of love/And still is ours today."

Thanksgiving is a reflection of divine relationship and not of outward circumstances.

## **Today in history... APRIL 23**

### **April 28, 1789: MUTINY ON THE HMS BOUNTY**

(HISTORYCHANNEL.COM) Three weeks into a journey from Tahiti to the West Indies, the HMS *Bounty* is seized in a mutiny led by Fletcher Christian, the master's mate. Captain William Bligh and 18 of his loyal supporters were set adrift in a small, open boat, and the *Bounty* set course for Tubuai south of Tahiti.

In December 1787, the *Bounty* left England for Tahiti in the South Pacific, where it was to collect a cargo of breadfruit saplings to transport to the West Indies. There, the breadfruit would serve as food for slaves. After a 10-month journey, the *Bounty* arrived in Tahiti in October 1788 and remained there for more than five months. On Tahiti, the crew enjoyed an idyllic life, reveling in the comfortable climate, lush surroundings, and the famous hospitality of the Tahitians. Fletcher Christian fell in love with a Tahitian woman named Mauatua.

On April 4, 1789, the *Bounty* departed Tahiti with its store of breadfruit saplings. On April 28, near the island of Tonga, Christian and 25 petty officers and seamen seized the ship. Bligh, who eventually would fall prey to a total of three mutinies in his career, was an oppressive commander and insulted those under him. By setting him adrift in an overcrowded 23-foot-long boat in the middle of the Pacific, Christian and his conspirators had apparently handed him a death sentence. By remarkable seamanship, however, Bligh and his men reached Timor in the East Indies on June 14, 1789, after a voyage of about 3,600 miles. Bligh returned to England and soon sailed again to Tahiti, from where he successfully transported breadfruit trees to the West Indies.

Meanwhile, Christian and his men attempted to establish themselves on the island of Tubuai. Unsuccessful in their colonizing effort, the *Bounty* sailed north to Tahiti, and 16 crewmen decided to stay there, despite the risk of capture by British authorities. Christian and eight others, together with six Tahitian men, a dozen Tahitian women, and a child, decided to search the South Pacific for a safe haven. In January 1790, the *Bounty* settled on Pitcairn Island, an isolated and uninhabited volcanic island more than 1,000 miles east of Tahiti. The mutineers who remained on Tahiti were captured and taken back to England where three were hanged. A British ship searched for Christian and the others but did not find them.

In 1808, an American whaling vessel was drawn to Pitcairn by smoke from a cooking fire. The Americans discovered a community of children and women led by John Adams, the sole survivor of the original nine mutineers. According to Adams, after settling on Pitcairn the colonists had stripped and burned the *Bounty*, and internal strife and sickness had led to the death of Fletcher and all the men but him. In 1825, a British ship arrived and formally granted Adams amnesty, and he served as patriarch of the Pitcairn community until his death in 1829.

In 1831, the Pitcairn islanders were resettled on Tahiti, but unsatisfied with life there they soon returned to their native island. In 1838, the Pitcairn Islands, which includes three nearby uninhabited islands, was incorporated into the British Empire. By 1855, Pitcairn's population had grown to nearly 200, and the two-square-mile island could not sustain its residents. In 1856, the islanders were removed to Norfolk Island, a formal penal colony nearly 4,000 miles to the west. However, less than two years later, 17 of the islanders returned to Pitcairn, followed by more families in 1864. Today, around 40 people live on Pitcairn Island, and all but a handful are descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers. About a thousand residents of Norfolk Island (half its population) trace their lineage from Fletcher Christian and the eight other Englishmen.

## **Brotherhood, continued...**

"It's like this," said Hultz: "Frank Byrnes (pointing at Hubler) and Hawk Eye Pearce (pointing at himself referring to two characters from the television series, M\*A\*S\*H.)"

But now it is the other way around.

"We have a lot of spats, but they're like family spats," Hubler continued.

Hubler, the youngest of the three NCOs in the group, admits to having maturity issues at times, but justifies it with "I get things done."

The men have given each other nicknames, picked up traits from one another and pulled pranks on each other.

Hubler says their relationship is "more than a brotherhood, because brothers wouldn't do this to each other."

But very seldom does anyone take the joking and ridicule to heart.

Despite what seems to be perpetual fun and games, morale hasn't always been at its peak.

"We've had some really rough days," Hultz said. "Being extended, that was a rough day. When Sotelo was killed, that was a rough day. The holidays were pretty rough too."

But what kept them going was that they weren't alone.

"You always had a friend to talk to ... someone always had your back," said Spc. Andrew White.

The men have been together through the worst of times over the last year, and will continue over the coming months.

After an estimated 3,600 missions, and seeing how the men work and watching how they react, the senior sergeants in the COLT Team agree that their men are a driving force behind the success of the regiment.

"Most 40-years-old executives couldn't handle the stress that these kids have been under," Hultz said. "We have the best Soldiers in the regiment."





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myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2004				As of: Tuesday, April 27, 2004 8:38:25 PM		
Start Time	SPORTS	ATLANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	Start Time
00:00		HEADLINE NEWS	STAR TREK VII: GENERATIONS	ESPNEWS: THE HOT LIST		00:00
00:30		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG):		HEADLINE NEWS	NAVY/MARINE CORPS NEWS	00:30
01:00	THE HOT LIST			TODAY	LESTER HOLT LIVE	01:00
01:30	THE HOT LIST	THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN (TVPG):				01:30
02:00	AROUND THE HORN		CINEMA SECRETS (TVG): - CRASH COURSE		HEADLINE NEWS	02:00
02:30	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	EBERT & ROEPER AT THE MOVIES (TVPG):		NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	02:30
03:00	NHL - PLAYOFFS - 2ND ROUND GM 3: TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING @ MONTREAL CANADIENS	4 QTRS	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - LOST AND FOUNDATION	SESAME STREET	ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT	03:00
03:30			THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS		CBS EVENING NEWS	03:30
04:00		NBA - PLAYOFFS - 1ST ROUND GM 4: MIAMI HEAT @ NEW ORLEANS HORNETS	THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - ITCHY AND SCRATCHY: SCRATCHY: THE MOVIE	BLUE'S CLUES - LET'S BOOGIE	COUNTDOWN WITH KEITH OLBERMANN	04:00
04:30			THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - THAT'S NOT WHAT I SAID	WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG):		04:30
05:00			ALLY MCBEAL (TV14): - BOYS' TOWN	THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG):	HANNITY & COLMES	05:00
05:30	ESPNEWS					05:30
06:00	ESPNEWS		STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION (TVPG): - STARSHIP MINE	THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG):	THE NEWSHOUR	06:00
06:30	NBA - PLAYOFFS - 1ST ROUND GM 4: MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES @ DENVER NUGGETS	ESPNEWS				06:30
07:00		HEADLINE NEWS	TACTICAL TO PRACTICAL (TVPG): - TRANSPORTATION, WATERCRAFT, WEAR GEAR	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	BET NIGHTLY NEWS	07:00
07:30		ESPNEWS		JUDGE JUDY (TVPG):	NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT	07:30
08:00		HEADLINE NEWS	SECRETS OF WAR (TVPG): - FRENCH RESISTANCE	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	LARRY KING LIVE	08:00
08:25				GUIDING LIGHT (TV14):		08:25
08:30		HEADLINE NEWS				08:30
09:00	INSIDE THE NBA	SESAME STREET	STAR TREK VIII: FIRST CONTACT		NEWSNIGHT WITH AARON BROWN	09:00
09:13				GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14):		09:13
10:00	SPORTSCENTER	BLUE'S CLUES - LET'S BOOGIE		BETWEEN THE LIONS (TVY): - ART PARTY	PAULA ZAHN NOW	10:00
10:30		WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG):		TEAMO SUPREMO (TVY): - THE CHIEF'S NEW GROOVE/CAPITOL OFFENSE		10:30
11:00	AFL - LOS ANGELES AVENGERS @ CHICAGO RUSH	THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG):	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - LOST AND FOUNDATION	POPULAR MECHANICS FOR KIDS (TVY7): - EPISODE 3	NIGHTLINE	11:00
11:30			THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	LIBERTY'S KIDS (TVG): - NOT YET BEGUN TO FIGHT!	HEADLINE NEWS	11:30
11:46		THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG):				11:46
12:00			THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - ITCHY AND SCRATCHY: SCRATCHY: THE MOVIE	JEOPARDY! (TVG):	HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS	12:00
12:30			THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - THAT'S NOT WHAT I SAID	HEADLINE NEWS		12:30
12:35		GUIDING LIGHT (TV14):				12:35
12:52				PACIFIC REPORT		12:52
13:00			AMERICAN IDOL (TVG):	ESPNEWS	CNN DAYBREAK	13:00
13:17		GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14):				13:17
13:30				HEADLINE NEWS		13:30
13:52				PACIFIC REPORT		13:52
14:00	SPORTSCENTER	HEADLINE NEWS	STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION (TVPG): - STARSHIP MINE	8 SIMPLE RULES FOR DATING MY TEENAGE DAUGHTER (TVPG): - GOODBYE (PT. 2)	THE O'REILLY FACTOR	14:00
14:30		JUDGE JUDY (TVPG):		BERNIE MAC SHOW, THE (TVPG): - LOVE BUG		14:30
15:00	NHL - PLAYOFFS - 2ND ROUND GM 3: DETROIT RED WINGS @ CALGARY FLAMES	TODAY	TACTICAL TO PRACTICAL (TVPG): - TRANSPORTATION, WATERCRAFT, WEAR GEAR	AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL (TVPG): - THE GIRL WHO IS AFRAID OF THE SNAKES	GOOD MORNING AMERICA	15:00
16:00			SECRETS OF WAR (TVPG): - FRENCH RESISTANCE	THE O.C. (TVPG): - THE HEARTBREAK		16:00
17:00	SPORTSCENTER	BETWEEN THE LIONS (TVY): - ART PARTY	STAR TREK VIII: FIRST CONTACT	HEADLINE NEWS	HEADLINE NEWS	17:00
17:22				PACIFIC REPORT		17:22
17:30		TEAMO SUPREMO (TVY): - THE CHIEF'S NEW GROOVE/CAPITOL OFFENSE		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG):	CHANNEL ONE	17:30
17:45					ABC WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING	17:45
18:00	NBA FASTBREAK	POPULAR MECHANICS FOR KIDS (TVY7): - EPISODE 3			THE EARLY SHOW	18:00
18:30	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	LIBERTY'S KIDS (TVG): - NOT YET BEGUN TO FIGHT!		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN (TVPG):		18:30
19:00	SPORTSCENTER	JEOPARDY! (TVG):	THE WILD THORNBERRYS (TVY): - LOST AND FOUNDATION			19:00
19:30		HEADLINE NEWS	THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD		19:30
20:00	ESPNEWS	ESPNEWS	THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - ITCHY AND SCRATCHY: SCRATCHY: THE MOVIE	DIRTY HARRY	FOX NEWS LIVE	20:00
20:30	BASEBALL TONIGHT	HEADLINE NEWS	THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - THAT'S NOT WHAT I SAID			20:30
21:00	SPORTSCENTER	8 SIMPLE RULES FOR DATING MY TEENAGE DAUGHTER (TVPG): - GOODBYE (PT. 2)	AMERICAN IDOL (TVG):		FOX NEWS LIVE	21:00
21:30		BERNIE MAC SHOW, THE (TVPG): - LOVE BUG				21:30
21:45				FLETCH		21:45
22:00	MLB - CLEVELAND INDIANS @ CHICAGO WHITE SOX	AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL (TVPG): - THE GIRL WHO IS AFRAID OF THE SNAKES	STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION (TVPG): - STARSHIP MINE		FOX NEWS LIVE	22:00
23:00		THE O.C. (TVPG): - THE HEARTBREAK	TACTICAL TO PRACTICAL (TVPG): - TRANSPORTATION, WATERCRAFT, WEAR GEAR		HEADLINE NEWS	23:00
23:30				CINEMA SECRETS (TVG): - BATTLE ZONE	INSIDE POLITICS	23:30